

**Northeast State Community College
and
Walters State Community College
Joint Report on Inter-institutional Pilot (General Education)**

Northeast State Technical Community College
and
Walters State Community College
Joint Report on Inter-institutional Pilot Test Administration (General Education)

In accordance with the pilot test plan approved under Performance Funding Standard 1.B jointly submitted by Northeast State and Walters State, a coordinated "pilot test" of ETS's Academic Profile (standard-form) was continued by the two institutions during academic year 2002-2003 as a cooperative venture. As part of this pilot test process, meetings were held during the year between academic and performance funding representatives from both institutions (i.e., Northeast State and Walters State). The purposes of these meetings were to plan, initiate, and analyze the findings of the Academic Profile pilot examination. This report briefly summarizes the process, results, and some of the conclusions reached with regard to this pilot test.

In accordance with the original pilot test plan and the subsequent inter-institutional meetings, both institutions tested sophomore-level students with technical majors at their respective colleges consistent with the approved sampling and testing methodology. This methodology enabled both institutions to provide the examination to sophomore-level students with technical majors who were similar to graduates with respect to general education coursework and training. As such, this methodology provided an environment for a cohort of research subjects that had generally similar or comparable attributes of typical institutional graduates.

Upon completion of the testing process, results of the both pilot tests were shared between the two institutions for the purpose of joint analysis and evaluation. The committees' findings are presented in the following sections.

Table 1 identifies the primary individuals involved with the pilot test at both institutions. Other individuals representing academic, student service, and institutional research functions were included in the initial review and subsequent evaluation of the test process as well as the results. Inter-institutional consideration was necessarily focused on common findings and associated conclusions emanating from the separate analysis of each institution. This process provided the opportunity for the participants to draw joint conclusions while still retaining their institutional perspectives and considering potential local applications of the test results. Under the Performance Funding cycle plan, the pilot test of the Academic Profile is the third of five continuous years of joint pilot testing sponsored by and between the institutions.

Table 2A depicts a summary of the test results for academic year 2002-2003, technical graduates from both institutions. Table 2B depicts a summary of the test results for Northeast State for academic years 2000-2001 (technical graduates), 2001-2002 (university parallel graduates) and 2002-2003 (technical graduates). Table 2C depicts a summary of the test results for Walters State for academic years 2000-2001 (technical graduates), 2001-2002 (university parallel graduates) and 2002-2003 (technical graduates).

The separate scoring reports for academic year 2002-2003 for each institution are addressed in Attachments A and B.

Table 1 Pilot Test Participants

<u>Northeast State</u>	<u>Walters State</u>
Mr. Michael Bledsoe Dean of Technical Education	Dr. Lori Campbell Associate Professor of Education and Dean, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and General Education Planning Officer
Mr. Don Coleman Division Chair of Health-Related Professions	Ms. John Russell Counselor and Director of Testing
Ms. Nancy Forrester Division Chair of Mathematics	Dr. Mary Lou Apple Vice President for Academic Affairs
Ms. Susan Graybeal Dean of Institutional Effectiveness	Dr. Pam Goodman Vice President for Student Affairs
Ms. Lana Hamilton Division Chair of Sciences	Ms. Debbie Scott Dean of Planning, Research and Assessment
Ms. Carole Shaw Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services	Dr. Jean Ann Irwin Associate Professor of Developmental Education, Mathematics and Director for Special Academic Projects
Dr. Xiaoping Wang Division Chair of Behavioral and Social Sciences	Dr. James Crawford Division of Humanities
Mr. William Wilson Division Chair of Humanities	Ms. Marty Rucker Division of Health Programs

Table 2A - Summary of Pilot Test Results of 2002-2003 Technical Graduates

	Northeast State	Walters State
Total Score	440.2	440.2
SD	16.5	11.4
Number	25	25
Academic Sub-scores		
Humanities	Mean: 113.8 SD: 5.4	Mean: 113.9 SD: 4.9
Social Science	Mean: 112.1 SD: 5.7	Mean: 113.5 SD: 4.3
Natural Science	Mean: 115.7 SD: 5.6	Mean: 116.0 SD: 4.1
Skills Sub-scores		
Reading	Mean: 117.8 SD: 6.3	Mean: 119.0 SD: 5.5
Writing	Mean: 113.8 SD: 4.9	Mean: 113.8 SD: 3.6
Critical Thinking	Mean: 110.4 SD: 5.3	Mean: 110.4 SD: 4.2
Math	Mean: 112.1 SD: 5.0	Mean: 111.0 SD: 3.8

Table 2B - Summary of Pilot Test Results of Northeast State 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 Graduates

	NORTHEAST STATE		
	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Total Score	442.6	447.0	440.2
SD	14.3	15.8	16.5
Number	25	25	25
Academic Sub-scores			
Humanities	Mean: 115.1 SD: 4.5	Mean: 116.0 SD: 5.8	Mean: 113.8 SD: 5.4
Social Science	Mean: 112.7 SD: 5.4	Mean: 116.2 SD: 5.7	Mean: 112.1 SD: 5.7
Natural Science	Mean: 115.7 SD: 4.9	Mean: 117.1 SD: 6.5	Mean: 115.7 SD: 5.6
Skills Sub-scores			
Reading	Mean: 118.4 SD: 5.8	Mean: 120.1 SD: 6.7	Mean: 117.8 SD: 6.3
Writing	Mean: 114.6 SD: 4.9	Mean: 114.5 SD: 4.0	Mean: 113.8 SD: 4.9
Critical Thinking	Mean: 110.6 SD: 4.3	Mean: 113.4 SD: 6.0	Mean: 110.4 SD: 5.3
Math	Mean: 112.2 SD: 5.1	Mean: 113.3 SD: 4.5	Mean: 112.1 SD: 5.0

Table 2C - Summary of Pilot Test Results of Walters State 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 Graduates

		WALTERS STATE		
		2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Total Score		428.6	452.0	440.2
SD		12.1	17.3	11.4
Number		25	25	25
Academic Sub-scores				
Humanities	Mean: 110.4 SD: 4.7	Mean: 118.3 SD: 4.5	Mean: 113.9 SD: 4.9	
Social Science	Mean: 109.1 SD: 4.3	Mean: 115.8 SD: 6.4	Mean: 113.5 SD: 4.3	
Natural Science	Mean: 112.0 SD: 4.8	Mean: 117.8 SD: 6.6	Mean: 116.0 SD: 4.1	
Skills Sub-scores				
Reading	Mean: 113.0 SD: 5.9	Mean: 121.1 SD: 5.1	Mean: 119.0 SD: 5.5	
Writing	Mean: 111.4 SD: 4.1	Mean: 115.6 SD: 5.0	Mean: 113.8 SD: 3.6	
Critical Thinking	Mean: 107.1 SD: 4.1	Mean: 114.5 SD: 6.0	Mean: 110.4 SD: 4.2	
Math	Mean: 108.6 SD: 3.0	Mean: 115.6 SD: 4.7	Mean: 111.0 SD: 3.8	

For the purpose of the analysis, three areas of common agreement regarding the test process overall were generally determined. These include:

- (1) Academic Profile compatibility with general education curriculum,
- (2) measurement of performance and improvement in general education, and
- (3) student motivation related to general education testing.

Each of these areas will be considered from the perspective of appropriate highlights as noted below:

Academic Profile Compatibility with General Education Curriculum

- When compared to the other exam alternatives on the market and approved for pilot testing, the Academic Profile (standard-form) assessment instrument appeared to cover more of the “domain” of general education within the curricula of both institutions than other potential instruments. The subsequent results of the pilot testing process and analyses at both institutions continued to support this concept.
- The academic subjects actually covered by this examination (i.e., math, English, humanities, social science, and natural science) are minimally represented in most academic programs offered at the associate degree level by the respective institutions.
- The test design of the Academic Profile enables students to have a “reasonable” chance of answering questions in academic areas where they have not had specific coursework. This opportunity is due, in part, to the test emphasis on broader critical thinking and mental “reasoning” skills. For example, students should be able to reason towards a correct answer, based

solely upon the information provided in the question. In other words, prior knowledge in the subject area specifically addressed by the question is not absolutely necessary.

Measurement of Performance and Improvement in General Education

- Upon a more detailed review of the test by academic administrators and faculty, the Academic Profile initially appeared to have “face validity” from the perspective of content. This overall validity was later confirmed in part by initial test results from both institutions.
- Test results, test norms, and test-scoring comparisons provided by the Academic Profile vendor (ETS) enabled both institutions to quickly identify key levels of scoring results. These results also enabled a determination of the test performance differences between various types of students within an institution. Additionally, these detailed reports supplied to the institution are part of the standard test analysis report package provided by the vendor.
- Standard-form pilot test data were substantial enough to support curriculum decision-making, at least from a broad perspective. Participants noted favorable comments regarding the potential for “use” of test results and the institutions ability to incorporate changes based upon the results. Additional research and continued testing with Academic Profile, Standard Form, has allowed both institutions to more extensively identify the best and fullest use of the results. Faculty are particularly interested in the analysis of the skill dimension subcores for the pilot groups tested in project. Skill dimension subcores provide for the analysis of Proficiency Levels in the Skill Dimension

Areas – reading, critical thinking, writing, and mathematics and the Academic

Areas – Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences.

- Other assessment needs related to general education could also be addressed on a limited basis (i.e., critical thinking) with this instrument especially if the institution obtains the data in raw format from the vendor for specific institution research applications.

Student Motivation

- Both institutions have often noted the challenges regarding student motivation on general education assessment instruments. These negative experiences are partly due to the test requirement that does not mandate a minimum score for graduation. It has also been noted that fewer students perform well on longer tests.
- Based upon initial experiences with the standard-form (2 hours), students indicated by discussion the following:
 - ? The Academic Profile, Standard Form, test was “lengthy.”
 - ? The format of the test and the test questions were easily understandable

In conclusion, the following summary points are offered:

1. The Academic Profile, Standard Form, is a legitimate and may be a potentially favorable instrument for assessing general education in Tennessee two-year colleges. In order to better ascertain the validity of the perceived inverse correlation between test scores and the length of the testing instrument, Ms. Graybeal, Northeast State, shall contact ETS and inquire as to the mean score of community colleges utilizing the

Standard Form versus the mean score of community colleges utilizing the Abbreviated Form.

2. From the perspective of both institutions, the pilot test provided extensive detail information and was ultimately worth the considerable time and effort.

Attachment A
Northeast State Technical Community College Score
Report

Attachment B

Walters State Community College Score Report